

**SCIENTIFIC NEWS.**

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Clarke read a paper on "The Doctrine of Signatures and the Law of Similars," in which he contended that there was more truth than moderns are apt to allow in the old doctrine that plants and other medicinal substances have some outward peculiarity by which their healing properties may be known. The Law of Similars propounded by Hahnemann declares that drugs which have the power of producing symptoms of disordered health have also the power of curing those who present the like symptoms in the course of ordinary disease. According to this law, the best way of obtaining the "signatures" of drugs is by healthy persons testing them on themselves. But Dr. Clarke maintained that the striking features of plants were not to be despised as indications for their use. Thus the eye-like Euphrasia, commonly called the Eye-bright, is really an excellent remedy in a large number of cases of eye disease. Also, Dr. Clarke said, there was often a singular correspondence between the physical characters of a plant and the effect it produced. He instanced especially the Ice-plant, *Cistus Canadensis*. "In the months of November and December these plants send out near the roots broad, thin, curved ice-crystals, about an inch in breadth, which melt in the day and are renewed in the morning." The curious feature, he said, was that when a tincture is made of this plant it produces sensations of coldness in almost all parts of the body, and had cured patients presenting abnormal sensations of coldness. He urged that the sphere of operation of the law of similars might be extended to include correspondences between characteristic appearances of drugs and disease-manifestations.

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**THE LAWS OF "SIMILARS."**

[41200.]—WITH reference to the paragraph on p. 379, it would be interesting to know what amount of truth there is in the statements said to have been made at the Homœopathic Congress. Euphrasia (Eyebright) is said to be "an excellent remedy in a large number of cases of eye-disease," which, technically digested, may mean that a decoction of Eyebright is useful in some affections of the eye ; but why the Ice-plant is named *Cistus Canadensis* is a bit of a puzzle, because there is a vast difference between *Cistus* and *Mesembryanthemum*. These homœopathic gentlemen are themselves bits of puzzles, and it seems to me that you can take a whole cabinet of homœopathic remedies (possibly a whole warehouse) without feeling any ill effects, but, if you have faith, with much benefit. I guess it is the old story of the influence of the mind on the body. S. S. C.

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### THE LAWS OF "SIMILARS."

[41214.]—"S. S. C.," in your last issue (letter 41200, p. 407), would like to know what amount of truth there is in the statement that *Euphrasia* (eye-bright) is "an excellent remedy in a large number of cases of eye-disease." Before going into this matter, let me say that the law of similars, which was promulgated by Hahnemann in 1796, and is the treatment of disease by medicines selected according to the rule "*Similia similibus curantur*"—"Let likes be treated by likes"—is in no way connected with the "doctrine of signatures." This doctrine is thousands of years old, and took note of the colour, shape, and various peculiarities of marking, &c., of plants and mineral substances, which were supposed to indicate their special medicinal quality or appropriate use—as yellow flowers for jaundice, bloodstone for hæmorrhage. However this might be, in leading to the employment of a drug in certain diseases, as *euphrasia* in eye-disease, it gives no indication in which class of eye cases it would be useful. By the law of similars we are enabled to say with certainty when to employ it—i.e., a tincture of the whole plant is made, and tested upon the healthy human body; such tests or provings, as they are called, show that the eyes are the special seat of the influence of *Euphrasia*. Conjunctivitis is very marked, with photophobia, and there are indications of affection of the deeper tissues and of vision. Correspondingly, *Euphrasia* is among the chief of our eye medicines, and has cured simple and chronic conjunctivitis, catarrhal ophthalmia, specks and ulcers on the cornea, &c. You will doubtless remember that the Archangel, according to Milton, when he would clear the vision of our first parent,

"Purged with *Euphrasy* and rue  
The visual nerve, for he had much to see."

The common names of *Cistus Canadensis* are "Rockrose," "Ice-plant," and "Frost Weed." Some of the symptoms produced by a tincture or decoction of this plant are: forehead cold, and sensation of coolness inside forehead, in a very warm room; cold feeling in nose; sensation of coldness of tongue, larynx, and trachea; saliva is cool; breath feels cold; empty and cool eructations; cool feeling in stomach before and after eating; cold feeling in whole abdomen. Dr. Clarke, at the Homœopathic Congress, related a case where the patient complained of coldness of the whole left side of the body; she (the patient) feared that paralysis was coming on. *Cistus* was prescribed, and there was soon an end of the one-sided coldness and the fear of paralysis along with it. It might be well to mention that the majority of members taking part in the discussion of Dr. Clarke's paper did not support him in his idea that the ancient doctrine of signatures should occupy a place of no small importance. Now as to the point that "you can take a whole cabinet of homœopathic remedies (possibly a whole warehouse) without feeling any ill effects, but if you have faith, with much benefit." Well, it is quite true that homœopathy is of no use for poisoning vermin or for killing patients; but it does not follow that because a preparation cannot kill, therefore it cannot cure. It must also be remembered that the medicines are not the crude drugs, but dilutions of them. The normal eye can bear a very strong light, which to an inflamed eye would cause exquisite pain. This fact supplies the answer to the objection to homœopathic medicines, on the score of their harmlessness. If faith was necessary before you could be cured, then only human beings could derive benefit from the system; but homœopathic remedies are given with equally good results to animals.

A. W. Leslie – Lickley.

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**“SIGNATURES” AND “SIMILARS.”**

[41228.]— I DO not quite gather from letter 41200, in the issue of June 17th, if “ S. S. C.” really does suppose that the old forgotten medical superstition of “ Signatures,” an attempt to revive which was made recently, as reported (why so insignificant a matter was accorded the space I cannot imagine) in this journal on June 10th, is identical with the other formula of “ Similars ” still used as a dogma to indicate the basic principle of homœopathy.

If “ S. S. C.” actually has made this extraordinary error, he has certainly completed for us the humour of the otherwise utterly insignificant episode ; I must remind him that the society before which the paper setting forth the quaint old doctrine of “ Signatures ” was read, and the body of medical men for whom he expresses such contempt, consist of medical men who have passed through precisely the same professional training, and hold the same degrees and diplomata, as every other legally-qualified doctor in the British Isles ; that their methods and scientific knowledge are as up-to-date as those of the foremost of their orthodox brethren ; and that, until the point of the selection of a drug for therapeutic use is reached, the homœopaths work and think on much the same lines as all the rest of the profession. Can “ S. S. C.” really think that this body of educated men would accept and base their practice upon that eccentric dogma of “ Signatures ” ? If he does so think, he offers a deliberate insult to men whose attainments are infinitely beyond his comprehension.

I may, perhaps, do well to supplement the paragraph reporting the “ Signatures ” paper (which read as if the thing formed an important part of the proceedings, and was seriously discussed) by informing those interested, that one member present, in the very large and representative meeting, was found to support the author, and I believe that in England there are some half-dozen others who regard that funny old notion as worthy of discussion.

As “ S. S. C.” once again trots out that outworn and wearying argument of the swallowing of the drugs in a medicine-case, I suppose I must refer to it. I don't know how many times I have asked men who fetch up this old scarecrow, “ Why don't you do it ? ” It is an utterly irrelevant statement. Even if it were true it would be so ; but it is not true. If “ S. S. C.” prefers suicide, and by that method, it is no affair of mine ; but I warn him that it would be suicide ; for the medicine-case which is carried by every medical man practising homœopathy contains at least 15 dangerous drugs, in a form and quantity sufficient to be fatal to the fool who took them.

Of course, like others who are absolutely ignorant

on the subject they so easily run into print upon, "S. S. C." supposes that the small quantity of medicine given forms an essential part of homœopathy. Once more, and for the hundredth time, I assert that *homœopathy can be practised with doses of any magnitude*, so far as quantity is concerned. Homœopaths *do not claim* that they use minute quantities exclusively; it is not the amount, but the molecular *form or state of subdivision* of the drug, which is essential. The only limit as to quantity is that less shall be given than will aggravate the disease symptoms; and even this is denied by some, who find that rapid alleviation of symptoms often comes directly after a sudden increase due to the drugs given, when this is really homœopathic to the symptoms—i.e., it is capable, in health, of producing those symptoms which are found to be relieved by it in disease.

As I do not think any concise and common-sense statement of the present stage of development of the old dogma of Hippocrates, *Similia similibus*, has been given in this journal, I venture to set down an outline of the points of difference between the homœopaths and the orthodox, and I should like to hear any reason which may seem to justify the still existing, though fast disappearing, ridicule of these principles. Being myself a purely surgical specialist on the hospital staff, my claim to speak may be disputed; but if the laborious and conscientious study of the work of my physician colleagues, and the personal observation and experience of the method, during 20 years, are of any weight, I think that even "S. S. C." will allow my claim.

Our friend "S. S. C." has certainly produced a high-class specimen of what a man who is absolutely ignorant of the matter he deals with can do—in the way of blunder! I do not allude to the botanical point—I am as ignorant of botany as is "S. S. C." of homœopathy; but, unlike him, I am unable to give an opinion on the matter as to which I am uninformed.

I should never have imagined that anyone could so mix up the two terms "Signatures" and "Similars" as to take them for the same definitions; but "S. S. C." seems actually to have done this, and he writes, in letter 41200, in the issue of June 17th, in a way which suggests that he thinks the recently-exhumed mummy doctrine of "Signatures" is a dogma actually supported by the homœopathic school. It may be well, perhaps, to supplement the paragraph which appeared in the "Scientific News" columns of this journal on June 10th (why it could possibly have seemed worth the space I cannot in the least understand), and which recorded one eccentric idea in one paper, which was scarcely regarded as of any importance at the meeting, that in the large and representative assembly there was found *one* member to support the author of the paper (the Annual Congress of Homœopaths in London); and to add that in the British Isles there exist perhaps half a dozen more of that opinion. The thing is merely a perplexing personal notion held by the reader of the paper in question, who wishes to revive as a serious opinion the old doctrine, or medical superstition (as it appears to me) of "Signatures," which, with a host of dogmata equally curious, has been forgotten for a long period of time. I cannot here criticise the dogma: it is to me quite incomprehensible; but I am unable to attack it for that reason, as I should be in the case of any opinion advanced by a man who is intelligent and honourable, and obviously conscientiously convinced of the truth of his opinion, however absurd it may seem to me. To ridicule an opinion on a matter which you have never really studied, even if you think it too utterly ridiculous for serious consideration, is, in my humble opinion, an action opposed to the very essence of the modern scientific spirit and method of thought.

But as "S. S. C." is obviously quite in the dark on the subject of homœopathy, which he so easily ridicules, and as very few of the general public are in a better position, I venture to record some of the main reasons which guide homœopaths in their practice; although I am purely a surgical specialist on the staff of the London Homœopathic Hospital, yet my opportunities of studying the principles on which my colleagues on the physician's side of the institution are perhaps the more useful, as being those of one seeing things from the outside, and impartially.

To do more than state in the form of asserted facts, and some deductions from them, the reasons which support the homœopathic practice, would demand far too much space. I can only trust that "S. S. C." if, on consideration, he is able to do so, will kindly point out in what respect these principles are open to the contemptuous ridicule of their opponents.

As to that ancient argument about swallowing the contents of a case of medicines used in homœopathic practice—an argument so often advanced but never actually put to practical demonstration; I will not waste time on it. If "S. S. C." wishes to commit suicide that way, let him do so; I only suggest that he should take the drugs one at a time, and ask a homœopathic practitioner to be there to take notes of the many sufferings caused by the drugs, so that some benefit may come to science

from the record; as the notes may perhaps guide homœopaths to a medicine to relieve suffering in illness such as "S. S. C." has felt as the effect of that drug. Perhaps also, it will be well to leave the certainly fatal drugs to the last. It is a pity that some of these must overlap in their action, as there will not be enough time to get them all in quite separately before "S. S. C." retires."

First of all, and the very heart of homœopathy, is this. The conviction that there is, in the human physical constitution, a *vis medicatrix nature*, or a strong "tendency towards recovery from illness," a "recuperative power," and that it is by working *with*, not *against*, this force, that diseases is best alleviated. Where is the absurdity here?

Next, and the outcome of that main principle—that the symptoms of disease—our working data—should be regarded as the indications of the working of that recuperative force in its fight against the disease action, and therefore (perhaps this is the absurdity?) that the symptoms are not necessarily evidences of movements to be *opposed* by drugs which will suppress, stifle, or conceal them, but are generally such as should be so treated by medicines that the physical movements (a really fitting term is difficult to find) shall be rather aided, even sometimes increased, by the use of drugs capable of producing similar effects. We must "push where Nature pulls." Will "S. S. C." please indicate the nonsensical aspect of this?

The considerations underlying homœopathy are mainly, in addition to the above vital articles of belief:—

A medicine, to act curatively, must enter the blood-stream; otherwise it cannot reach the special organ affected.

A medicine, to enter the circulation, must pass, by osmosis, through the infinitesimally thin membranous walls of either the absorbent or capillary blood-vessels of the stomach, or other mucous surface.

This osmosis must mean that the molecules of the drug have to penetrate between the almost unimaginably minute intervals between the cells forming the membranous walls of the vessels. Therefore, extremely minute subdivision of the drug must be secured.

Every substance which, when taken into the body, produces perceptible effects on it, does so by virtue of a special "power of elective affinity" it possesses; and these affinities are proved best by the effects of the drug taken in full doses in health.

That the symptoms thus produced by a drug are the evidence of its particular sphere of action, its "patho-genetic" or symptom-producing action.

And that this action, being in each instance the analogue of some similar group, or combination of disease symptoms, is the indication which points to its use in the treatment of disease—i.e., the "Patho-genetic" sphere is identical with the "Therapeutic."

And, perhaps, as important as any: That the organs and tissues which in health are specially affected by a drug, are *intensely* more sensitive to that drug's influence when disordered or diseased. Will "S. S. C." please note? The belief is, that the diseased organ is more sensitive and receptive to the drug, by many ten thousand fold, then it is in health, and will benefit by a correspondingly attenuated drug.

Finally.—That there are four available tests to prove the presence of a drug, and that the three first may utterly fail to show that a trace even of the drug exists; and then the fourth, more delicate by far, will prove that the drug is there, by the curative effects it produces. The four tests are—

1. The microscope and touch.
2. Chemical tests.
3. The crude irritant effects on stomach, &c., which are forced to cast out the drug, and to prevent its entering the circulation (as purgatives, emetics, &c.) And,
4. The physiological test of the extreme sensitiveness of some diseased organ to the action of the drug.

"S. S. C." wants the third form of test—the most uncertain and crude of all. Before he will take a drug to help him in illness, he would prefer to bring disorder on some part which was, up till then, in healthy condition, rather than to accept the benefits of the fourth test. That is the test he could well try, out of the medicine-case; but he must remember that it is the disordered organ which alone would respond to the test, and that it would do *by getting better or well*. No amount of verbal discussion can equal that test.

Gerard Smith.

#### THE LAWS OF "SIMILARS."

[41229].—If Mr. Leslie-Lickley will refer to my letter on p. 407, he will see that the question is why is the Ice-plant called *Cistus*. Mr. Leslie-Lickley says (p. 432) that "the common names of *Cistus Canadensis* are 'Rock Rose,' 'Ice-plant,' &c.;" but Hooker, in his translation of Maout and Decaisne's "Botany," makes the Ice-plant *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*. There is only one genus in that family. The *Cistineæ* have at least

four genera, and differ from the *Mesembryanthemæ* in having one-celled ovaries, whereas the latter have ovaries several-celled. The Rockrose of our gardens is a *Cistus*; but I am curious to know how the Ice-plant comes to be called a *Cistus* by the homœopaths.

S. S. C.

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**THE LAWS OF SIMILARS.**

[41261.]—If “ S. S. C.” will refer to my former letter, he will find I do not say the ice-plant, *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*, is called a *Cistus*, but that the *Cistus Canadensis* is commonly called “ ice-plant,” “frost-weed,” or “frost-wort.” Nor do the homœopaths fall into the error “ S. S. C.” supposes. The “ British Homœopathic Pharmacopœia ” gives—“ *Cistus Canadensis*. N.O. Cistaceæ. *Syn.*, *Helianthemum Canadense*, *H. Corymbosum*, *H. rosmarifolium*, *Lechea major*. Rock Rose, Frost-wort.” I am afraid our esteemed Editor, in his notice of Dr. Clarke's paper, p. 379, is the cause of “ S. S. C.'s ” trouble, as he says Dr. Clarke “ instanced especially the ice-plant, *Cistus Canadensis* ” ; but, on referring to the paper in question, I find Dr. Clarke said, “ Some time ago, when making a study of *Cistus Canadensis*, I was struck with one characteristic developed in the provings. The common names of *Cistus*, as you know, are ' rock rose,' ' ice-plant,' and 'frost-weed.' During the months of November and December, the *Cistus* sends out near the roots broad, thin, curved ice-crystals, about 1 in. in breadth, which melt in the day and are renewed in the morning.” Is it surprising, therefore, that the plant should be commonly called an “ ice-plant,” even though there be another “ ice-plant ” in the field.

A. W. Leslie – Lickley.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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All communications should be addressed to the EDITOR of the ENGLISH MECHANIC, 332, Strand, W. C.

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"I would have everyone write what he knows, and as much as he knows, but no more ; and that not in this only, but in all other subjects : For such a person may have some particular knowledge and experience of the nature of such a person or such a fountain, that as to other things, knows no more than what everybody does, and yet, to keep a clutter with this little pittance of his, will undertake to write the whole body of physicks : a vice from whence great inconveniences derive their original."  
—Montaigne's Essays.

**TELEPATHY IN CORNWALL—SWALLOWING HOMŒOPATHIC REMEDIES EN BLOC—ABNORMAL PLANETARY OBSERVATIONS—P E R I O D S O F COMETS—HUYGHENIAN EYEPIECE FOR NEWTONIAN REFLECTOR — ANOTHER SOLAR PHYSICAL JOB—A SCIENTIFIC BALLOON ASCENT — LENSES FOR STELLAR PHOTOGRAPHY—WOODEN SKEWERS—PHOTOGRAPHING SOLAR PROMINENCES.**

[41262.]—

I have no intention of plunging here into the discussion as to the relative merits of allopathic and homœopathic treatment, and, moreover, have a strong personal objection to repeat myself ; but paragraph four of letter 41228, on page 453, really does provoke me to reiterate a story I told some years ago in these columns of my own brother, who, sitting in his club in Pall Mall, was dared by another member to swallow the entire contents (pills, tinctures, *et id genus omne*) of a pocket homœopathic medicine case, which he had laughingly offered to do for five shillings, and which he actually did there and then without producing the very slightest perceptible effect either for good or evil upon himself.

A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society.



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**THE LAWS OF SIMILARS—THE ICE-PLANT.**

[41280.]—Now (p. 481) we are beginning to find out why *Cistus Canadensis* is called the Ice-plant by homœopaths. When it is “commonly called” so, I demur, and ask by what right this section of the medical fraternity pervert botany? I note the effect of “*Syn. Helianthemum Canadense*,” and then quote T. Moore, F.L.S., of the Botanic Garden, Chelsea :—“*Helianthemum*, a genus of low, mostly prostrate shrubby or sub-shrubby plants, closely related to *Cistus*, from which they differ in having imperfectly three-celled, instead of five or ten-celled, capsules.” The name Rock-rose is equally applied to *Helianthemum* and *Cistus*, and Frost-weed or “Frost-wort” is *Helianthemum Canadense*; but Ice-plant is *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*, the crystals on which do not “melt in the day,” but “glisten in the sun like fragments of ice.” In fact they are insoluble in either rainy weather or in sunshine. My interest in this matter is simply that I do not see why anyone should be allowed to call something the Ice-plant, when there is a well-recognised and commonly-called Ice-plant of quite a distinct genus. I shall be obliged for the name of any authoritative work on botany which says the Ice-plant is either *Cistus* or *Helianthemum*. “Frost-weed” is quite a different thing.

S. S. C.

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### HOMŒOPATHY.

[16594.]—I FEEL that I ought, in the interest of truth, to give you my experience of homœopathy. Until a few months ago I had the greatest contempt for the system and its professors, partly as a result of my medical training, but chiefly because the curative power of infinitesimal doses seemed utterly incredible. It seems just as marvellous as ever it did, but experience has convinced me that there is more in it than I ever dreamed.

Homœopathy, however is not inseparable from infinitesimal doses. The proper dose is a matter of experience ; but the rule which is at the foundation of the system is that drugs which produce certain symptoms in large doses will cure them, when otherwise produced, in small ones. How this is accomplished I do not profess to know, and doubt if anybody else does ; but that it is a useful guide in the selection of drugs I have just as much evidence as I have of the curative efficacy of so-called allopathic remedies.

It would be possible to give many speculations as to the *modus operandi* of infinitesimal or larger doses acting homœopathically. These might all be wrong and the practice nevertheless right. That it is not impossible for minute doses to affect the system I have been led to believe from these considerations : Nerves are sensible to imponderable matter ; for example, the nerves of smell are affected by the odour of a grain of musk, which will exhale it for years without loss of weight, and again, the presence of a cat in a room will excite, in susceptible persons, a violent attack of asthma. Hence, when the system is altered by disease, no *à priori* considerations, drawn from the inertness of a drug (say charcoal) in a state of health, are sufficient to prove that it is *impossible* for that drug to affect the diseased tissues. Experience is the only test. *Solvitur ambulando*.

What saith experience, allopaths being witnesses ? Before I admitted the reasonableness of homœopathy, I had, with many other doctors, seen a drop of ipecacuanha wine, taken every hour, stop many cases of sickness, often in two or three doses ; if, then, three drops of this drug can affect the system in certain cases, who shall dare to say that one drop cannot, that one quarter of a drop cannot, or any lesser quantity ? All are improbable, and only experience can decide.

Having reached this point, a careful trial of many drugs has convinced me that infinitesimal doses do act in appropriate cases with marvellous effect, and that when this is the case, large doses are known to produce the symptoms complained of. Let anyone try tincture of cantharides in some cases of irritability and inflammation of the bladder. Let them use the third dilution of the poison of bees (*apis*, one drop in 1,000,000 of spirit of wine) in ulceration of the cornea and photophobia. Let them give drop doses of liquor arsenicalis to a drunkard with morning sickness. If these succeed, let them fairly try the leading homœopathic drugs in suitable cases, and they will be convinced.

But the fact is that I am a member of the British Medical Association, and, if my name were appended to this letter, I should be turned out of it, and be a marked man for the future. Hence, only general practitioners have a fair opportunity of testing the question ; they can, as I do, mix their medicines with flavouring ingredients, and the patients don't know that there is any alteration in their system ; the patients get better (as if " by magic," sometimes, as I am often now told), and

that is all they desire. The physicians who prescribe dare not prescribe homœopathically, and so know nothing of the system practically, and these are the gentlemen that raise a howl of execration on any unfortunate homœopath. As a fact, I know that several regular practitioners make use of homœopathic remedies as I have described, and, in time, no doubt, the barrier will be broken down, chiefly, perhaps, by the public's insisting on having any remedy which will do them good.

M. D. Lond.

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.**

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"I would have everyone write what he knows, and as much as he knows, but no more ; and that not in this only, but in all other subjects : For such a person may have some particular knowledge and experience of the nature of such a person or such a fountain, that as to other things, knows no more than what everybody does, and yet, to keep a clutter with this little pittance of his, will undertake to write the whole body of physicks : a vice from whence great inconveniences derive their original."  
—*Montaigne's Essays.*

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ATTEMPT TO EXTINGUISH GAS BY A PUFF—DELTA CYGNI—DESCRIBING STAR — COLOURS—SUGGESTED NEW ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY—OPTICAL ILLUSIONS—ORDNANCE MAPS AND STAR-MAPS—JUPITER—POWERS FOR VIEWING JUPITER AND SATURN—OBLIQUE VISION, &c.—MORE THAN ONE CAN BEAR—HOMŒOPATHY—CYCLONES, &c.—TOTAL REFLECTION — LAND — SURVEYING — GROWING WATER CRESSES IN PANS — THE ATTACK ON MR. RANYARD BY THE TAVERN-CLIQUE IN THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY—FINDING THE MERIDIAN FOR A TELESCOPE-HOUSE—THE ACHROMATIC OBJECT GLASS.—NOTES OF A NIGHT'S OBSERVATIONS —GLADSTONE MEDAL — LOCAL TIME OF NEW MOON — VELOCITY OF LIGHT AND JUPITER'S SATELLITES.

[16862.]—

I may perhaps be allowed to supplement the anecdote with which "H. O'B." finishes letter 16824 (p. 508) with a somewhat similar one. A brother of my own, lunching at his club, got into conversation with a believer in homœopathy, and ultimately made a small bet that he would swallow the entire contents of his friend's case of homœopathic medicines. This he did there and then. After a short interval he walked out into Pall Mall, showed himself, moreover, that afternoon in the Park, returned to his club to dinner, and never for a single instant felt the very slightest effect, pleasant or unpleasant, from his simultaneous consumption of a considerable proportion of the drugs contained in the homœopathic pharmacopœia. He drew a very distinct inference from this at the time, in which I am bound to say that I entirely acquiesced. I need, perhaps, scarcely add what it was.



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#### HOMŒOPATHY.

[16959.]—UNDER whatever name the administration of drugs may be carried on, so long as the principle of the law of “ Likes by likes being cured ” is maintained, it is homœopathy.

Hence, daily in our metropolitan hospitals homœopathy is practised, inasmuch as medicines are there prescribed on a principle based on that law, ignorantly, inadvertently, or purposely, but certainly based on that law. Arsenic is there given for eczema, phosphorus for consumption, belladonna for scarlatina, ipecacuanha for spasmodic cough and vomiting, sulphuret of lime, better known to homœopaths as hepar sulphuris, for enlarged tonsils and chronic cough, strychnia for paralysis, and so on. These and many more remedies are used homœopathically. The general public are fully aware that no physician dares to order any but a minute dose of strychnia, or of arsenic, but it does not seem to be generally known that the action of that minute dose is curative by being homœopathic. Facts prove this—strychnia in large doses infallibly paralyses previously healthy motor nerves. Our orthodox physician, however, in common with his hated homœopathic rival, prescribes it in very small doses to cure paralysis ! Here we clearly see that the symptoms of the *disease*, and those induced by large doses of the drug are *similar*, hence we

select that drug and administer it in small doses to cure the disease. This is homœopathy, and it cures. Drugs, then, have opposite actions in large and minute doses. It is pleasanter to take the smaller dose, and in order to do this we must select a drug which would produce in large doses symptoms similar to those we wish to remove. Now, let us take another example of how this rule is applied by the dominant school of medicine. I have culled the following respecting the effects of overdoses of belladonna from a text-book on *Materia Medica*, recognised by the University of Edinburgh, by Dr. Scoresby-Jackson :—" There is sometimes an eruption upon the skin resembling that of scarlatina ; strangury is occasionally observed. The characteristic symptoms are dryness of the throat, dilation of the pupil, perversion of vision, and mirthful delirium." Then when giving the medicinal uses of the drug the same author says :—" It is used as a prophylactic of scarlet fever " (!) Homœopathy again.

Need I give more examples of the fact that homœopathy is being universally practised ? Assuredly not. A correspondent in a recent impression of " ours " published the interesting fact that a friend of his had for a small bet swallowed the contents of a case of homœopathic medicine without in the least degree injuring his exuberant spirits or rude health. Was that heroic gentleman aware that he had merely taken so many antidotes, one medicine counteracting the effects of the other ? Probably not. He was quite innocent of the science of chemistry.

The idea which prevails with some, that because the swallowing of a considerable quantity of homœopathic medicine brings about no inconvenient, if any, symptoms, therefore it is idle to suppose there is any active drug in it, or that it could do no good if there were, falls to the ground when we consider what an infinitesimal quantity only of infectious miasm is required to transmit such serious maladies as small-pox or scarlet fever. The prick of a pin or the sting of a gnat is sometimes followed by erysipelas, a result apparently out of all proportion to the cause. But small-pox and scarlet fever on the one hand, and erysipelas on the other, do not appear directly they are contracted. There is a latent or growing period during which the virulence of the disease is gathering force to be presently manifest. So the homœopathic medicine takes longer or shorter time to effect the mastery of the symptoms it is given to obviate, and the glory of it is in that is not strong to do harm, but rather gentle, pleasant, and certain to do good.

**Practitioner.**